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64-2003

March 16, 1964

MEMORANDUM TO: The Honorable  
John A. McCone,  
Director of Central Intelligence.

SUBJECT: CIA Memo on the Congo

We have read with care and interest the CIA memorandum entitled, "The Political Situation and Prospects in the Congo," of 20 February (CCI No. 0753/64). The subject is important in itself and is at the moment of particular concern because of the Under Secretary's prospective trip; we have, therefore, formulated in writing some comments on points over which our views diverge from the text. I attach a copy of these comments with the hope that they may form the basis of a comparison of information between us to make sure that we are not talking from different bases.

As we see it in general, politics in the Congo revolve around a delicate power balance between the central government and the provinces, and the consequent necessity for power-diffusing coalitions in the political process. This background explains the dilatory conduct of Adoula and many other responsible Congolese, and in our view justifies an assessment of political prospects in the Congo that differs considerably from the one expressed in the CIA memorandum.

We have much appreciated the abundance of information on the Congo supplied by CIA and have, we feel, made thorough use of it in the reports we have been publishing on this subject in fulfillment of our responsibilities in this field. It is disturbing that so different an interpretation can arise from presumably the same CIA and additional materials which we have been using. I hope, as I said before, that our experts can get together at least to identify the basis of these differences.

State Department review completed

Thomas L. Hughes

Attachment:

INR Comments on CIA Memorandum

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INR Comments on CIA's Intelligence Memorandum,  
The Political Situation and Prospects in the Congo,  
February 20, 1964

CIA Paragraph One

The Memorandum underestimates Adoula's influence and fails to give sufficient weight to the considerable leverage that the central government can exercise over the provinces.

The Intelligence Memorandum is accurate in stating that Prime Minister Adoula lacks a regional political base and in suggesting that his influence rests primarily in his skill as a mediator and compromiser of conflicting interests. Adoula wields power as chairman of a coalition of generally compatible moderates who exercise control over the instruments of coercion, the ANC and the National Sûreté, as well as over central government sources of financial largesse. Part of his success in this role may be attributed to his only occasional direct confrontations with either his lieutenants or opponents in Leopoldville and the provinces.

The members of the so-called "Binza group" appear to have been unable to resolve their conflicting political interests without Adoula, who probably is responsible for the group's continued cohesion, and its accommodation with other forceful political personalities such as Minister of Defense Anany.

Adoula, on occasion, also has proven capable of strong action. The successful dispatch of Gizenga's Stanleyville and Kalonji's South Kasai government, and the termination of the Katanga secession show that his manner of governing has merit. Moreover, he has played direct and significant roles in monetary reform, negotiations with Belgium on debt settlement, planning for ANC retraining, and curbing provincial control over education budgets.

The quasi-federal structure of the Congolese government under the Loi Fondamentale precludes Leopoldville's domination of the provinces, though there is no doubt that, if the ANC were more effective, it might have been employed more vigorously to support central government authority. Stability in the Congo, however, will continue to depend largely on 1) the ability of the provinces to govern themselves (albeit with the support of the ANC) and 2) the respect of the provincial governments for the federal principle.

On balance, the cooperation of the provinces with the central government has been good since January 1963 -- admittedly with several stark exceptions.

Though conscious of their local power, the provincial leaders are aware of their dependence on Leopoldville subsidies and import quotas,

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and also often welcome the stabilizing influence of an ANC physical presence. The central government's relationship with the provinces has most often been faulted by an inability to fill the provinces' increasing demands for funds and services and a tendency to substitute "states of exception" -- military government -- for central government intervention on the political plane.

CIA Paragraph Two

The GOC should be congratulated for its recent firm efforts to prevent provincial squandering of massive education subsidies.

It would be more accurate to refer to the circumscribed powers enjoyed by Adoula and his colleagues in dealing with the provinces rather than to their "lack of power." The Memorandum points out the considerable political and economic leverage maintained by the central government. Indeed, in late 1963 the central government took a bold step to reduce provincial waste of subsidy funds by assuming direct control of education expenditures throughout the provinces. Adoula's persuasive powers are hindered by his failure to create a favorable national image. Moreover, his dependence on provincial leaders for support in the upcoming elections should contribute to his often exhibited reluctance to bear down on the provinces.

CIA Paragraph Three

The Memorandum seriously underrates the role played by the ANC; viewed within the context of the Congo, the ANC, as a body, has been responsive to General Mobutu and has proved to be perhaps the most effective element of political stability throughout the Congo.

Although the ANC has exhibited an effectiveness and response to discipline much improved over that exercised by the ex-Force Publique in 1960, INR agrees with the Memorandum that the ANC, judged by normal standards, is a fragile reed of stability. Despite the Belgian failure to implement its retraining program for the ANC, this army, according to Consulate Elisabethville, has performed surprisingly well during 1963 in turbulent Katanga, during which period Belgians requested ANC protection from bands of ex-gendarmes. ANC activities in Kwilu -- given transport and communications handicaps -- have been somewhat fumbling but commendable thus far. The ANC held firm during last year's strikes and police mutiny in Leopoldville. There is no documented "widespread" resentment against the ANC, though isolated forays in the brutal tradition of the Force Publique have rendered it unpopular in some areas.

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The susceptibility of military elements to subversion and the attraction of plotting to seize political power should not be expected to be less than that exhibited by the armies of former French Africa or East Africa.

CIA Paragraph Four

The Adoula government deserves greater credit for its political survival and, concomitantly, the maintenance of the country's national political and economic structure than was accorded it in the Memorandum. Adoula's "indecisive and unimpressive performance" should in fairness be judged against the unimpressive showing of his political opponents.

The Memorandum points out that political survival together with the containment, through timely political action, of the troublemaking potential of opposition forces are the major achievements of the Adoula government. Certainly the government's efforts, though characterized as dilatory by some, have assisted in the isolation of Gizenga (still under detention), the decline -- at least temporarily -- of Tshombe, the factionalization of the MNC/L, the defeat of parliamentary attempts to censure the government, and the voluntary exiling of radical opponents. The expulsion of Soviet Embassy personnel in November 1963 also has hampered opposition efforts. These actions by the central government have served to maintain the country's national political and economic structure.

CIA Paragraph Five

The Memorandum's contention that the Kwilu tribal violence "is only a few degrees greater than that of some other provinces" is in error. While the Kwilu uprising is serious, it is not more effectively organized than the earlier efforts of Gizenga in Stanleyville or Kalonji in South Kasai -- two areas subsequently reincorporated into the Congo.

The Katanga secession, the Gizenga regime in Stanleyville, and the Kalonji state in South Kasai were more effectively organized than the current Kwilu upheaval. Whatever the political aspirations of Pierre Mulele, the origins of the Kwilu troubles are clearly tribal. Mulele's contact with the Committee of National Liberation (CNL) does not necessarily mean that he is obtaining meaningful support from the CNL or that the CNL as yet is able to provide assistance. Though Mulele probably received encouragement from Communist China, the role of the communists in Kwilu to date appears to be limited. The ANC probably can eventually contain and quell the Kwilu disturbance. This will require a major military commitment over many months.

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While military action may be able to subdue terrorists such as those of Mulele, it cannot resolve historic tribal rivalries. Fortunately, none of the other provinces at present are troubled by violence approaching that which has disrupted the Kwilu area.

CIA Paragraph Six

The Memorandum fails to recognize the fundamental dependence of the predominantly Belgian business community in the Congo upon GOC cooperation and foreign exchange allocations. The export industries certainly are not "self sufficient," and the conflict between foreign business interests and the central government has been a major political issue since independence.

The Memorandum notes the encouraging fact that production in the modern sector of the economy compares favorably with pre-independence levels. There is, however, a change from the Belgian administration in that mining enterprises and agricultural plantations are now dependent upon the central government for foreign exchange allocations for foreign personnel and imports, including machinery and vehicles. Moreover, the central government's failure to insure physical security could prompt the departure of many technicians and other foreigners now resident in the Congo, thus crippling the productive capacity of key export industries. The central government also has prime responsibility for the maintenance of the Voie Nationale and other transport links. Basic to the prospects of the Congolese economy are the decisions made by individual firms. If they determine that returns on their investments do not warrant continuing production, they well may decide to curtail or even cease operations.

CIA Paragraph Seven

The fact that the "centralist" bloc is reported to have sufficient votes on the constitutional commission to block extremist provincial demands for local autonomy should not be overlooked.

The objective of the constitutional commission is to produce a draft constitution to replace the complex, often unworkable, and unratified Loi Fondamentale. We understand that the "centralist's" retain sufficient votes to block extreme provincial demands for local autonomy. Moreover, Kasavubu -- who seldom whistles in the dark -- expects a constitution to emerge from the commission. While we are not sanguine, neither can we prejudge the outcome.

CIA Paragraph Eight

While we have no major difference, we comment as follows:

Given its uphill fight in reaching accommodations with provincial leaders, Radeco now appears to have significant though not firm support. Moreover,

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Nendaka probably realizes that Radeco -- whatever its final strength -- can be no more than a loose association of provincial political leaders.

Worthy also of inclusion in the Memorandum is another major national party, Anany's PDC, which has shown as much potential as Radeco. Though consolidation of Radeco and PDC has not yet been seriously broached by either, it remains possible as elections approach.

Adoula's failure to back one or the other of these moderate parties probably has hindered their coalescence. But we believe that he is biding his time until he is forced by approaching elections to choose to back one, or to press for fusion. The latter course seems more likely.

It seems most unlikely that elections will be held in mid-1964. Before elections take place, a constitution should be adopted, the question of the disputed territories resolved, a census taken, and an electoral law adopted. Furthermore, we believe the failure to hold elections by June is advantageous to the government, particularly in view of troubled provincial situations that threaten to become serious disorders if exacerbated by electoral campaigning.

CIA Paragraph Nine

While we have no major difference, we comment as follows:

We agree with the Memorandum that neither postponement of elections nor wrangling over the constitution will greatly exacerbate the problems presently confronting the central government. We also agree that the UN military presence serves as a psychological deterrent to disorders in Katanga and Leopoldville, a deterrent that may be totally removed by July.

CIA Paragraph Ten

We would go farther than the Memorandum and state that there is no satisfactory short-term "solution" for the West in the Congo. It will be a major achievement simply to maintain a national structure in the Congo over the coming years.

The phrase "satisfactory solution for the West in the Congo" appears to us to demand qualification. The complexities of the Congo seem to impede any quick "solution" of the country's problems. Given the foreign involvement in the Congo and the extent of Congolese domestic problems, the

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Congo is likely to remain for the foreseeable future an international stepchild.

More important, we feel, is that the political structure of the Congo still retains a national form three-and-one-half years after independence and that major segments of the economy have often maintained or even increased their pre-independence production levels.

CIA Paragraph Eleven

Adoula is no more "politically shopworn" than the vast majority of Congolese political figures. While we cannot discount the possibility of Adoula's ouster at any time, Adoula has been considered on the brink of overthrow on various occasions during his two-and-one-half years as premier.

It is difficult to estimate Adoula's capacity for political survival. His premiership reflects the volatile nature of Congolese politics. When he and Gizenga were rival candidates at the Lovanium conclave in 1961, the contest was judged as a toss up; Adoula won almost by acclamation. By December 1962 it seemed probable that the MNC/L and its tactical allies had the ability to topple the Adoula government; their censures of individual ministers were halted abruptly by the UN military sweep in Katanga and the recess of Parliament. April saw another major assault on the Adoula regime, one which Adoula himself turned aside during a personal confrontation of Kiwewa before the Senate. Again Adoula's political future was being discounted in autumn 1963, but his arrest by the military governors of Leopoldville did not materialize.

The possibility of an ANC takeover, perhaps in association with the "Binza group" cannot be discounted. Though the "Binza group" comprises several of the more dynamic of the Congolese leaders, the prospect that this leadership could manage the country's affairs more effectively than the Adoula government is unlikely. Other formidable opponents include the CNL, Tshombists, factions within the ANC, and labor. The most articulate criticism of Adoula has come from the modest labor movement, which at one time supported a national austerity program. Labor's strength, while largely confined to Leopoldville, could provide a focal point for others who might wish to embarrass the present regime.

It would seem prudent to consider the political pressures generated by the shortage of foreign exchange available to the Congo. Including technical assistance, the Congo probably can expect no more than \$90 million

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in foreign assistance during 1964. The allocation of present foreign exchange earnings has caused some hardship among the business community. In 1960 major Belgian business concerns took an active interest in the Congolese national elections; during the period of Katangan secession, the Union Minière and, in broader perspective, the Société Générale, played a pivotal role. Given Belgian investments in excess of \$2 billion throughout the Congo, Belgian businesses can not be assumed to be passive observers of the Congolese political scene.

CIA Paragraph Twelve

While we have no major difference, we comment as follows:

We agree that the subjugation of ethnic and provincial interests to a national political organization does not appear to be an attainable objective in the Congo at present. This is true for the government and the opposition alike. In seeking to align sufficient support among provincial leaders to swing an electoral victory for a national coalition of moderates, the coalition leaders well might find Adoula the most suitable candidate to head a moderate slate.

CIA Paragraph Thirteen

While we have no major difference, we comment as follows:

The Memorandum points out several groups or individuals who could become involved in a power grab. Elements of the ANC most probably would be called upon to provide the force required for such a move. This would heighten the danger that the ANC might split into separate units loyal to contending aspirants to power, thus returning the country to the chaotic security conditions of 1960-61. It is also correct to emphasize the distinction between a "strong man" who can topple a Congolese leader and one capable of effectively managing the government. While the thought of a Nasser-like "strong man" may appeal to those who become impatient with temporizing political actions of the central government, the fragile structure of Congolese politics seems to exclude such a prospect for the present.

Kamitatu's stature has been much diminished by the Kwilu revolt. His vaunted "pilot province" is now a political shambles. Never popular, Kamitatu is likely to find himself henceforth even weaker at the political bargaining table.

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Anany and Mobutu do not get along well. At least for the moment, Mobutu's support of Anany would be essential if he were to succeed Adoula.

CIA Paragraph Fourteen

We do not agree that "Tshombe has made it clear that his objective is power at the national level." Many of his efforts seem directed at the reestablishment of his power base in southern Katanga. It is premature to assume that Tshombe in fact would be willing to join the central government.

We cannot agree that the "Binza group" would relish Tshombe's return to an "influential position" in Leopoldville, though several members may see in this a possibility for reaching a better accommodation with Katanga in preparation for the upcoming elections. Most members of the "Binza group" are said to fear Tshombe's capacity for intrigue, and the power of his bankroll. It is not certain that Tshombe's primary objective is power at the national level. As the Memorandum points out, Tshombe remains the best-known figure in Katangan politics. He apparently is finding it awkward, however, to remote-control from Spain the rebirth of Conakat.

It can be argued that the only central government position acceptable to Tshombe would be that of Prime Minister. In this context, a tactical alliance with the "nationalists" -- with whom he cooperated in early December 1962 -- is possible. We do not feel, however, that Tshombe would be able easily to obtain ANC support, vital to any political aspirant. The ANC is not likely soon to forget the humiliation it suffered at Kongolo and elsewhere at the hands of Tshombe's mercenaries and gendarmes.

With Tshombe as Prime Minister, Leopoldville's relations with the provinces might improve for a time, but they would be likely soon to founder on the basic requirement that the central executive be able to carry out its constitutional responsibilities in the provinces. Revenues must accrue to the central government for redistribution to the unviable provinces. Moreover, the central government must have the authority to protect the country's foreign exchange position through the allocation of import licenses and foreign exchange quotas.

In sum, any future Congolese chief executive would face many of the same problems confronting Adoula and the responses of a responsible national leader are likely to be similar to Adoula's.

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CIA Paragraph Fifteen

The Memorandum's prediction that "a labor-radical government is likely to emerge sometime during the next year or so" is not substantiated by the considerable evidence available on the moderate political posture of the major Congolese unions. We would also point out the prospect that a radical central government would exercise less authority over the provinces than would a moderate coalition in Leopoldville.

Labor leaders generally have not proven radical elements in the Congolese political equation. Though they opposed some of Adoula's policies, and disapprove of the "politicians," they now appear to be collaborating with central government representatives at the constitutional commission in Luluabourg. Moreover, they have shown no evidence of leaguings with the so-called "nationalists" exiled in Congo (Brazzaville).

We feel that it is exceedingly premature to suggest that a labor-radical government is likely to emerge during the next year or two. Strong and often justified dissension exists among labor, the military, the political outs, the youth, the unemployed, and some members of the government. No matter what government is in power, this discontent will persist.

To maintain stability under these conditions, the executive must be endowed with an effective coercive instrument to impose its will during the period that it is getting on with the tasks of reorganization of the government and rebuilding of the economy. Thus, it is imperative that the ANC be strengthened.

At the same time, it should be recalled that the Congolese have a strong sense of legality in their concept of the proper conduct of government. Thus, there will be strong pressures in Leopoldville and the provinces to construct a viable central government related meaningfully to the provincial administrations.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Honorable Thomas L. Hughes  
Director of Intelligence and Research

With reference to your memorandum of 16 March concerning differences in appraisal on the situation in the Congo, I agree completely that the experts from CIA and from the Department of State should get together to discuss differing views. More importantly they should make sure that they are sharing fully all the information available.

The situation in the Congo is a complicated and important matter on which I would readily expect differing appraisals. I have asked Mr. Cline, Deputy Director for Intelligence, to follow up on the arrangements proposed for a meeting of the experts from CIA and the Department of State.

*J. A. McCone*  
JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

WElder:MMW (17 Mar 64)

Orig - Addressee  
cc - DCI  
ER

ENCLOSURE